

05.03. until 06.03.2015 in Frankfurt (Oder), Germany

Borders in the European Memories - A typology of remembered borders in today's Europe

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Recommended by M.A. Mike Plitt

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« L'histoire de l'Europe est celle de ses frontières »

Krzysztof Pomian, L'Europe et ses nations, Paris 1990

If the history of Europe is in fact the "history of its borders", as stated by Pomian, then the studies of European memories should tackle the topic of spaces and borders more directly than they usually do. Thus, the aim of this international workshop will be to throw light on the different ways borders appear in European memories. How are experiences of and with borders commemorated or remembered in a general way? Can you identify historical and regional trends?

Europe can be indeed described as a continent of "a thousand borders", a multiplex confinium – freely based on Robert Traba's essay on East Prussia, *Kraina tysiąca granic* (The land of the thousand borders), or the long-standing Zagreb based research project *Triplex confinium*. This is for instance demonstrated by the fascinating map published by the French geographer Michel Foucher in his book *Fragments d'Europe*: this map lists (nearly) all historical (state) borders from the Middle Ages up to Europe's present spatial order equally alongside each other. The cumulative effect is impressive; white spots are rare; the predominant impression is that of a closely-meshed, rugged space which has been produced over centuries.

After 1989-1991 a new impetus of fractionation of the continent took place that barely could have been predicted during the time of the Cold War. The remodelling or complete disappearance of existent borders by the disbanding of political and social orders as well as the drawing of new borders have brought the durability of old borders to light that finds expression in different material, cultural, social, and habitual forms up to (un)consciously active "phantom borders" (Béatrice von Hirschhausen). The typological attempt is supposed to form the focus of this conference project: the question concerning the relation between the nature and function of borders (system boundary, state border, national, religious, ethnic, imperial, military border...) as well as the resulting forms of memories (types and times of remembered borders: borders as places of commemoration, sites of cultural memory, "invisible" borders, "phantom borders", excluded memories...). Which social agencies do keep the subsequent memory of the borders alive? Which political, legal or cultural artefacts that have been produced by former space orders enable a re-actualization?

As discussions concerning European memories demonstrate, the Europeanization of the scientific approach always entails the risk of decontextualization. Therefore, the question of the ratio between "borders as places of memory" in the plural and "the border as a European site of memory" in the singular is supposed to be discussed in detail, based on regional examples. The circulation of images, discourses, thought patterns as well as functions, practices and experiences will be portrayed on a regional and local level, letting the shared/divided memories of Europeans become visible. As Luisa Passerini suggests, there still remains the question in what way they are also "shareable".

The consideration of the global historical dimensions of "European" places of memory appears to be imperative in order to stay up-to-date. The interfaces continental/global are supposed to become the topic of an exploratory panel, in which the experiences/memories of non-Europeans with European borders and the European dimension of memories at non-European borders will be examined.

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Grenzen in den Erinnerungen, Grenzen der Erinnerungen: Borders als europäischer Erinnerungsort

A project of the Viadrina Center B/Orders in Motion

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